

SAN DOMENICO CAIS ACCREDITATION



Report Highlights 2021



MESSAGE

FROM YOUR HEAD of SCHOOL and BOARD CHAIR

Dear San Domenico Community Members,



We are proud to share that this past summer, San Domenico once again received a full six-year accreditation from the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS), carrying on our long history as the first independent school in California. Of the 3,950 private schools in California, just 5% meet the ambitious educational accreditation standards required for membership in CAIS.

San Domenico's accreditation process launched with a Self Study in October of 2018 and included meetings, surveys, group discussions, and individual interviews with current parents, guardians, students, faculty and staff, alumni and alumni parents and guardians, and trustees and committee members including Dominican Sisters and PSA members. During this time, we together engaged in deep study and reflection and the accreditation team collected extensive feedback. Thank you to each of you who contributed time, energy, and feedback to the Self Study. After much editing, the final report was 160 pages long, not including the exhibits.

The process culminated in 2021, when the CAIS Accreditation Visiting Committee – composed of educators and administrators from peer schools – interviewed a broad representation of SD community members. Three months later, CAIS and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges awarded San Domenico another six-year accreditation!

The Self Study findings will inform our next strategic plan and guide our decision making as we continue to grow a strong foundation and program for future generations of San Domenico students.

Please join us in congratulating all who contributed to this report and even more so, the years of effort that built the 171-year-old program upon which it is based. We look forward to continued collaboration as we live out our mission together, responding to the needs of the times.

With gratitude and great pride,

Cecily Stock '77
Head of School

Richie Goldman
Board Chair

5% of 3,950
private schools meet the
ambitious educational
accreditation standards
required for membership
in CAIS

171 years of exceptional,
purpose-driven education

6 year, full accreditation
received by San Domenico
from the California Association
of Independent Schools (CAIS)

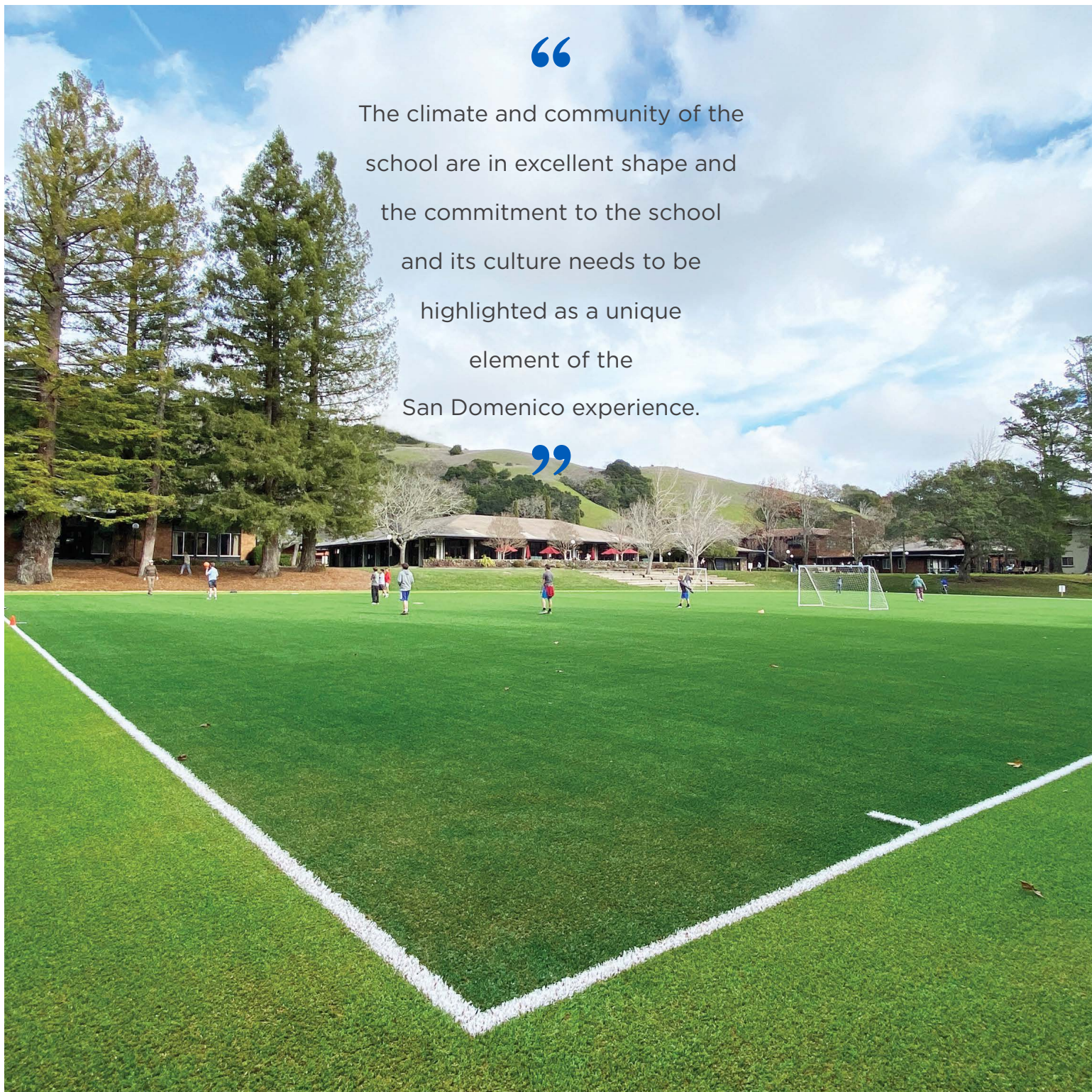
100% meeting or
exceeding student learning
experience standards

* NOTE: All quotes herein are from the
CAIS Visiting Committee Accreditation
Report.

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The climate and community of the school are in excellent shape and the commitment to the school and its culture needs to be highlighted as a unique element of the San Domenico experience.

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TIMELINE

- 2018** | October 2018, **Self Study Commences**
- 2019** | December 2019, **Self Study Steering Committee completes report and submits to CAIS**
- 2020** | March 2020, **CAIS Visiting Committee trip to SD cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic**
- 2021** | February 2021, **CAIS Visiting Committee Virtual Visit**
June 2021, **San Domenico receives full CAIS Accreditation**

CAIS VISITING TEAM

Mark McKee,
CAIS Visiting Committee Chair,
Head of School, Viewpoint
School, Calabasas, CA (K-12)

Jeneen Graham,
Upper School Principal,
St. Margaret's Episcopal School,
San Juan Capistrano, CA (PK-12)

Trudy Gross,
Associate Superintendent,
Student and Special Services
at Fremont Union High School
District, Fremont, CA (9-12)

Sarah Lantz,
Dean of Students,
Vivian Webb School,
Claremont, CA
(9-12 Day and
Boarding School)

Terry Lee,
Associate Head of School,
The Nueva School,
San Mateo, CA
(K-12 Day School)

SIGNIFICANCE

WHY CAIS ACCREDITATION MATTERS



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The School is keenly attuned to how they are serving their students. They are at the center of all decision making and inquiry.

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AFFIRMS

our high bar for academic rigor among students and faculty.

CREATES

accountability to all constituents.

ASSURES

community members that the school maintains the highest bar in providing a safe and enriching learning environment while maintaining an efficient and effective operation.

PROVIDES

education leaders at all levels with deserved recognition for going above and beyond the minimum to demonstrate their ongoing commitment to excellence and learning.

VALIDATES

the relevance and strength of our purpose-driven approach to education.

STRENGTHS

COMMENDATIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

The Visiting Committee's Report includes commendations on our tremendous successes since the last accreditation cycle and recommendations on how we may best live out our mission in the coming years. We are pleased to see that the report echoed what we found in our Self Study.



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The courageous steps taken in executing multiple major change initiatives – any one of which would have been significant in the span of time of an accreditation – reflect the execution of a bold vision for San Domenico's future. The Visiting Team salutes the School for so very successfully implementing this vision.

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STRENGTHS

Extension of coeducation through the Upper School created a compelling new identity as a unified, K-12 day and boarding school that brings its educational mission to new potential students and creates significant new opportunities for teaching and learning and for growth for students and for the School.

Recognition of athletic programming as not just good for physical fitness and sport, but as an anchor to school cohesion and K-12 school spirit.

Laudable focus in increasing staff, faculty, and student diversity.

A deep understanding of San Domenico's Dominican heritage, diverse and interfaith history, and values of study, reflection, community, and service inform the school culture and program. It is not just about an exceptional education, but social emotional learning and development of a sense of purpose, as well.

Critical review of hard and soft data, and student learning experience, at the center of all decision making and inquiry; this is an arena where the school clearly soars.

Response to the pandemic and to providing remote, hybrid, and exceptional in-person learning is to be commended.

The climate, community, and commitment to the school and its culture needs to be highlighted as a unique element of the San Domenico experience, reflected in high admissions demand.

Administrative team and Board of Trustees that is steadfast, clear on goals, and recognized as being open and supportive, even with high levels of stress and volume of work amid significant change.

Positive leadership giving and major gifts strategy and impact are contributing to financial stability.



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Students report a high level of support and great enthusiasm for what they are learning and how they are learning it.

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RECOMMENDATIONS



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SD completed a process that was authentically reflective of the School’s values of Study, Reflection, Community, and Service, culminating in a visit characterized by openness and a spirit of mutual inquiry.

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That the School consolidate and update its mission and vision statements, with regard to contemporary language and the current times, nonetheless maintaining and reflecting San Domenico’s long standing mission and enduring values.

That all constituents embrace and strengthen the School’s unique identity as a K-12, day and boarding school, in order to enhance collaboration and impact across divisions and departments, and in operations and programming with staff, faculty, and community volunteers.

That the boarding program continue to align programming with the School’s mission and overall goals for the Upper School.

That the Board and Administration continue to explore market data to inform future planning, in particular with respect to the enrollment mix of lower, middle, upper school; day and boarding, both domestic and international; and full pay and indexed tuition students.

That the Board conduct increased review of its bylaws, nominating, and onboarding practices in light of the current K-12 boarding and day school identity, so that the governing body reflects the School’s enduring values, commitment to inclusivity and diversity, and emerging needs for philanthropic leadership.

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Through its courage, fidelity to the essence of its mission and values, and the understanding that its identity must evolve in response to the needs of the current times, San Domenico has exceeded any outside expectations for its progress, coming to an enviable new place as Marin's only co-ed K-12 boarding and day school.

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SUMMARY

“In summary, the School’s entrepreneurial bravery and diligence in identifying, researching, developing, and implementing major change initiatives, is a model of collaborative, data-informed institutional change, grounded in values and aimed at a compelling vision and singular sense of purpose that will continue to inform programming and strategic planning.”

Because these key points are in line with our Self Study results, they already inform current operations and strategic planning. Thank you again to each and every one of you who contributed to our Self Study and this remarkable report we are so honored to have received.



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San Domenico remains committed to evolving to meet the needs of the times and providing a spiritual, values-based program in line with the mission. Teaching and leading with a spirit of inquiry and inclusivity drives the School’s program toward innovation while the School’s values provide rich history and grounding.

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An aerial photograph of the San Domenico School campus, showing several buildings, a large green lawn, and tennis courts. The school is situated in a valley surrounded by rolling hills and dense vegetation. In the background, a body of water and distant mountains are visible under a clear blue sky.

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Visiting San Domenico in the spring of 2021, we find a School that has come with great success through a watershed period of significant changes, led by the Board and Head of School and driven by the collaboration of the entire community.

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SAN DOMENICO SCHOOL • Exceptional Education and a Sense of Purpose
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